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Iran-Iraq War

Iraq fired eight surface-to-surface missiles at the city of Dezful late on 6 March inflicting "extensive casualties and damage," IRNA reported. Preliminary investigations showed 5 dead and 70 injured following the attack, the agency noted. In response to the attack on Dezful, an Iranian Armed Forces communique cited by the agency announced that Iranian forces would launch "artillery and aerial attacks" against the Iraqi cities of Basra and Mandali at 1130 GMT on 7 March, and advised residents to evacuate these cities.

Meanwhile, Iraq announced that its artillery began shelling the Iranian city of Abadan early on 7 March, according to INA. During the 3-hour attack three people were killed and five others wounded, IRNA disclosed.

Lebanon

An explosion in the Riyad al-Sulh area of Beirut killed 7 people and wounded 10 others, Beirut radio announced on 6 March. In the south, the IDF clashed with the Lebanese Army on 7 March at the village of Kawthariyat al-Siyad, some 10 miles south of Sidon, according to a Lebanese Army Command communique broadcast by Voice of Lebanon radio. Israeli tanks shelled Army positions in the village, the communique said, and the Lebanese returned the fire. Jerusalem radio had earlier reported that three "terrorists" were killed in clashes with the IDF and the army of southern Lebanon. In another development affecting the south, the Iranian Majlis approved a budget allocation of 1 billion rials to aid the "deprived and oppressed people of Lebanon," according to Tehran radio.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Phalangist Lebanese Forces sounded a cautionary note about relations with Syria during a news conference reported by Voice of Lebanon radio. Syria must prove that it can establish relations with Lebanon in a manner that does not infringe the latter's independence and sovereignty, he said, and the Phalangists "absolutely do not understand" calls for unity with Syria or for the Syrian Army's deployment in Beirut.

Egyptian-Jordanian Talks

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Jordan's King Husayn held a news conference, broadcast by Cairo radio, following talks concerning coordinated moves to solve the Palestine issue. Mubarak repeated his call for the United States to hold talks with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to prepare for future steps. He denied making statements that the PLO would not be part of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, and reiterated that the PLO "is everywhere." Asked about amendments to the PLO-Jordanian agreement, King Husayn declared that there have been no "amendments," only "clarifications." While Mubarak stated that he will stress the importance of "dialogue" during his upcoming talks in the United States, King Husayn concluded that there is a "very narrow window of hope" for resolving the Palestine problem and "this is the last chance."

Reacting to the meeting between President Mubarak and King Husayn, "political sources" in Jerusalem reiterated that Israel insists on "direct negotiations" with a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that does not include PLO representatives, Jerusalem radio reported. They contended that negotiations between the United States and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation would be "unacceptable" to Israel and the United States.

PLO

Executive Committee — The PLO Executive Committee met in Tunis to discuss the results of the recent talks between King Husayn and a Palestinian delegation, which conveyed a message to PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat from Husayn, Baghdad Voice of PLO radio reported.

Armed Struggle — Fatah Central Committee member Salah Khalaf told *DER SPIEGEL* in a recent interview that he would decline any offer for the PLO to fight Israel from the territory of neighboring Arab states, asserting that no matter how many fighters the PLO could muster, it would "not have a chance" against Israel's military might.

Abu Nidal — The Paris magazine *AFRIQUE ASIE* claimed that an interview with Sabri al-Banna, alias Abu Nidal, published by FRANCE PAYS ARABES in February was a fake because Al-Banna could not have been in Lebanon at the time the interview reportedly took place, according to AFP. *AFRIQUE ASIE* contended that Al-Banna has been receiving medical treatment in Eastern Europe during recent months.

Libya

Voice of Greater Arab Homeland radio announced that Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi received a number of Lebanese and Palestinian leaders including Walid Junblatt, head of Lebanon's Progressive Socialist Party, and Colonel Sa'id Musa Muragha, leader of the Fatah dissident movement.

Sudan

More than 200 Sudanese soldiers were killed on 3 March when they attempted to recapture Jokau from the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the clandestine SPLA radio reported.

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Iran

A bomb attached to a "terrorist" exploded at the Friday prayers ceremony at Tehran University on 15 March, IRNA announced. President 'Ali Khamene'i, who led the sermon, denounced the act as a plot by the "Munafiqeen splinter group," the agency reported. Five worshippers and the "terrorist" were killed as a result of the explosion, the agency stated.

Iran-Iraq War

While INA reported that Iranian artillery continued to shell Basra "residential areas" on 15 March, IRNA reiterated that Iran is prepared to halt its "aerial and missile" attacks on Iraqi residential areas if Iraq makes firm commitments to international organizations that it will stop its attacks on Iranian cities.

As for the battles east of the Tigris, an Iranian military communique reported that "magnificent victories" were achieved and that the number of Iraqi troops killed or wounded "surpassed 1,000," according to IRNA. The communique also stated that an Iraqi PC-7 plane was shot down in the area on 14 March. Nevertheless, an Iraqi military communique broadcast by Voice of the Masses radio maintained that the Al-Humayun and Al-Sakhrah areas were "completely purged" and that "thousands" of Iranian troops have been killed.

Lebanon

Phalangist Internal Crisis — The Lebanese Forces Command Councilannounced the formation of an "emergency committee" following a 14 March meeting, Voice of Lebanon radio reported. Fu'ad Nadir and Sami Ja'ja' were appointed members of the committee, the radio noted. Earlier, members of the Lebanese Forces Command met with members of the committee headed by the Maronite patriarch in Bkirki, according to the radio. In a statement on the Bkirki meeting broadcast by the radio, the leaders declared that they will continue to support all constitutional institutions.

Karami in Syria — Prime Minister Rashid Karami and Tourism Minister Walid Junblatt discussed the current Lebanese situation during a meeting with Syrian Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, according to Damascus radio.

UK Scientist Kidnapped — A UK Embassy spokesman announced that a British metallurgist was kidnapped by three armed men near his home in West Beirut on 14 March, AFP reported.

Egypt

President Husni Mubarak and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher discussed the Middle East situation during their 14 March talks in London, MENA reported. According to a PRESS ASSOCIATION report on the talks, Prime Minister Thatcher "offered her support" for Mubarak's peace initiative.

Describing the results of Mubarak's talks with U.S. officials as "expected," a Cairo radio commentator, in remarks broadcast by the radio, said no one expected the United States to recognize the PLO or begin negotiations with a PLO-Palestinian delegation "immediately." The commentator went on to note that a "positive sign" was the fact that the United States "stressed" that peace talks should be based on returning occupied territories and restoring Palestinian rights.

OAPEC-Iraq

The OAPEC judicial tribunal rejected Iraq's request for "urgent measures" to reopen its oil pipeline through Syrian territory and decided that "irrepairable damage" can be financially compensated, KUNA reported.

Sudan

SPLA Attacks — A Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) battalion attacked and captured a Sudanese Army garrison near Mongalla in Equatoria on 13 March, the clandestine SPLA radio reported. In another report the radio announced that SPLA forces shot down a Buffalo transport plane at Akobo the same day. However, a Sudanese military spokesman maintained that the transport plane carrying supplies for refugees "crashed" during takeoff, according to SUNA.

Muslim Brotherhood — Information Minister 'Ali Shammu, in an exclusive statement to the Egyptian paper *AL-AHRAM* cited by MENA, said that Iran was behind the "recent attempt" by Muslim Brotherhood members to seize power in Sudan. 'Ali Shammu went on to describe the recent arrests of Muslim Brotherhood members as a "precautionary measure."

Pakistan

The Foreign Ministry lodged a "strong protest" with the DRA charge d'affaires over three incidents of airspace violations by DRA planes over the Arandu area on 13 March, Karachi radio reported. According to the report a total of 11 DRA planes dropped 37 bombs and fired rockets during the attacks.

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